

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

December 6, 2005

Rep. Henry Hyde
Chairman
Committee on International Relations
2170 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Hyde:

We are concerned that on the most important foreign policy issue confronting the United States today, the conflict in Iraq, the Committee on International Relations has not held a single hearing at the full committee level since May 2004. We respectfully request that you hold a series of hearings on the ongoing U.S. involvement in Iraq at the earliest possible time, beginning in the next two weeks.

As you know, the United States is in Iraq under an authorization to use of force granted to President Bush by Congress. As Members of the committee that both has jurisdiction over this matter and initially considered and approved this legislation—H.J.Res. 114 reported out of our committee on October 7, 2002—it is not only our prerogative but also our constitutional responsibility to ensure proper accountability and oversight of the exercise of this authority. As such, we respectfully request you conduct a series of public hearings in the Committee on International Relations on the subject of the ongoing war in Iraq.

In particular, we would like to have the opportunity to publicly hear from administration officials and non-governmental experts on topics including:

1. **Administration Strategy.** Two and a half years after the war started the President has released his "Strategy for Victory in Iraq." The State Department should appear before the Committee to provide a further explanation of this strategy to Congress and the American people. How does the State Department interpret "victory" and how does the Department intend to play a role in its implementation? What does it anticipate will be the challenges and costs involved? How is the State Department contributing to reaching a stable political settlement between ethnic and political groups in Iraq? What actions is the State Department taking at the United Nations and with other countries to get their increased cooperation in resolving the situation there? How does this contribute to the eventual withdrawal of American forces from Iraq? What are the diplomatic

and political implications of retaining an 'over-the-horizon' US force in the region?

2. **Analysis of Insurgency.** Who are we fighting? How has this war unified the disparate elements of the insurgency? What role do foreign fighters have in the violence and the planning for the insurgency? What additional steps can be taken to undermine support for the insurgency and bring hostile Iraqi factions to the political negotiating table?
3. **Regional Diplomacy.** How is the United States working with Iraq's neighbors, other Arab countries and regional organizations and multilateral institutions to foster diplomatic and material support for the stabilization and reconstruction of Iraq?
4. **Status of Reconstruction.** What is the role of the State Department in reconstruction? What is the overall plan for using the \$23 billion appropriated by Congress for Iraqi reconstruction to stabilize the country? Exactly what benchmarks are being used to determine whether the plan's objectives are being met?

As both the human and the financial costs of the war in Iraq continue to mount and questions relating to prewar intelligence persist, it is critical for this committee to provide a venue for much needed oversight and accountability. The American public deserves to have open hearings that address these questions.

We urge you to begin hearings in the two weeks before the end of the first session and then as soon as Congress returns in 2006 for the second session of the 109th Congress.

Sincerely,



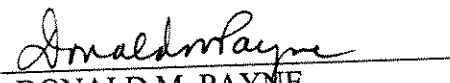
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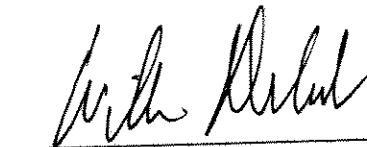


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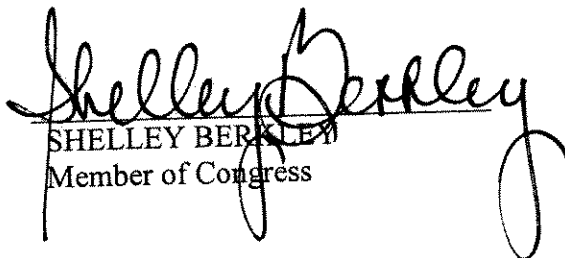

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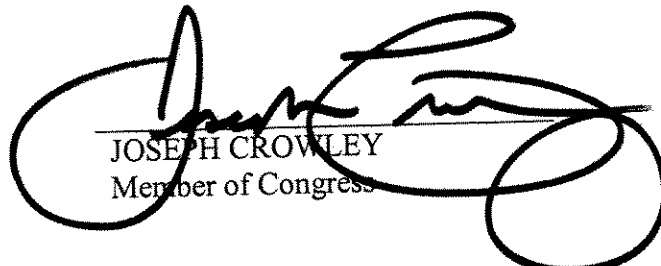

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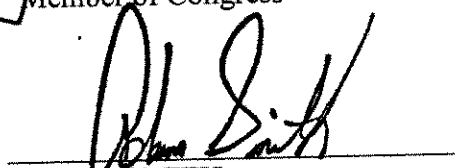

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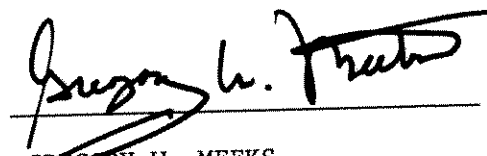

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